



THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS INC.

International Organization Offering Friendship and Understanding to Bereaved Parents

MIAMI COUNTY CHAPTER NO. 1870

March 2019 NEWSLETTER Vol. 37 No.13

Facebook page "The Compassionate Friends of Miami County Ohio Chapter 1870".
Chapter Leader: Kim Bundy, 1870 Westwood Rd, Troy, OH 45373/573-9877 kbundy@tcf@gmail.com
Editor: Jackie Glawe, 2445 N. Mntgmy Co. Line Rd., Tipp City, OH 45371/478-3318 im4song@aol.com

National Office - THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS, INC. - P.O. Box 3696 - Oak Brook, IL 60522-3696 - Ph. (630) 990-0010 or toll free (877) 969-0010 www.compassionatefriends.org - e-mail: nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org -RegionalCoordinator:DeanTurner.Ph. (614) 487-1163

The Grief of a Parent Who Has Lost an Older Child

*By Ron Byrd, Arlington reporter for TCF Northern Virginia & D.C.
regional newsletter Oct 2014 issue*

Perhaps I had my child longer than you had yours, but fortytwo years does not seem long. Perhaps there are more memories to hold in my heart, but I know yours are just as dear to you as mine are to me, even if your memories are memories of only one or two days.

Your dreams for your child are gone. So are mine.

Never did I imagine that I would have to deal with my child's death, instead of her having to deal with mine. My Erika died from a terminal illness that is not one of the "acceptable" diseases.

My child died from alcohol. The tools for remission of this disease are placed in the hands of the person who has the disease. Even with the help of treatment centers, the recovery was not to be.

One day at a time, my recovery is taking place. The pain after three and a half years has gone to a place where it can be tolerated. My story and my age may be different from yours, but the bottom line is the same. My child has gone to a place where I cannot go and I miss her so much. The pain of grief is still here, but I am living life one day at a time, enriched because my daughter came through my wife's body into our lives.

March Meeting – Mar 28th, 2019 **7:00pm**

Topic: *Randi Pearson shares thoughts on Dennis Apples book: Life after the death of my son:What I'm learning.*

March Refreshments:
Jackie Glawe (Memory of Jordan)

Thank you for February Refreshments
Cindy Glaser (Memory of Andy)
Kathy Barker (Memory of Nicole)

Meetings are held at:
Nashville United Church of Christ
4540 W. St. Rt. 571, West Milton, Ohio
Meetings are held in the basement of the church. Please park in the lot on the west side of the building. Enter the building through the door facing the west parking lot.

*The greatest test of time,
Is having to walk on
the path of Grief every
single day of your life
and surviving despite
the pain.*

~Narin Grewal

www.touchinsouls.com

The “C” in TCF

Webster's defines “compassionate” as: “Active sympathetic concern for the suffering of another; mercy.”

Lovingly known as TCF, The Compassionate Friends embodies this as the center of what we stand for: there is compassion for the families who are in the darkest and most frightening stage of grief; compassion for friends who are journeying this path at our side.

We stand at the center of our grief—it surrounds us, penetrates us and engulfs us for a very long time. TCF offers a safe place to express our pain without judgment. We understand and share the loss that echoes in our lives. Each path is unique, but we stand shoulder-to-shoulder in support and friendship as we help each other along.

But what about the compassion we express towards others in our lives? We often discuss things others say as they try to “comfort” us:

At least you still have other children...

God has his reasons...

Maybe it was for the best...

I know how you feel , my _____ just died, too...

You'll get over it, give it time...

As a bereaved parent, these simple phrases can set off emotional waves of anger and frustration because the deepest and most profound pain that lies in our heart is **not being acknowledged**. But how can one acknowledge what one does not know?

A lesson I've learned since Tony died seven years ago: **Grief is isolating**. One cannot truly understand the depths of despair and loss unless they have walked in our shoes. Often they want to help fix a situation that cannot be “fixed.”

What if we look past the words and see that they care about us? They feel helpless because it cannot be fixed and yet see us suffering beyond imagination. What if we were **compassionate towards them?**

Compassion for ourselves is a good thing, too. Be gentle. Go slowly. It's a whole new world living without the love, the dreams, the hugs from our child. When we open our hearts to compassion and include ourselves, it is easier to be compassionate towards others—remember they are feeling helpless, too.

As our hearts grow stronger, we begin to remember more the life and love of our child rather than their death. It is this love that carries us forward—for we will always endure their loss.

As we nurture and grow the seeds of love our children planted deep in our hearts, and as we reach out to family and friends, we appreciate the beauty of life and spring peeks into our hearts.

Compassion grows.

~D. Barta, TCF Portland, OR



National Compassionate Friends Conference
July 19th – July 21st, 2019, Philadelphia, PA

Several members of our chapter have attended yearly conferences. They highly recommend attending these National conferences where you will be amongst other bereaved parents who are also walking this child loss journey. You have the opportunity to attend workshops of your choice with other bereaved parents and presented by bereaved parents. Workshops are another way to obtain a tool for our survival tool belt we must carry around to journey through to the other side. You'll also hear keynote speakers and share dinner with other parents.

Don and Pam Fortener, members of our chapter have been notified of a wonderful opportunity by a local sponsor to help cover some of the costs of the conference. If you are interested in attending the conference and would like to get your name in our chapter drawing please send an email to our chapter leader Kim Bundy at kbundy.tcf@gmail.com.

“Butterfly Boutique” donations needed

Our chapter members have been asked to help with donations for the “Butterfly Boutique” that will be located at the upcoming 2019 National conference.

This letter is from the chairperson and co-chairperson of the Butterfly Boutique that will be located at the conference:

In order to be successful and raise money ... we need donations of items to sell. We would like to have new and gently used pre-owned items. We need anything that you have purchased or were given that has angels, butterflies, hearts, hummingbirds, dragonflies or any other appropriate subject matter. It could be jewelry (pins earrings, rings necklace, ankle bracelet) or jewelry box ..maybe a scarf or a tote bag ...a candle or coasters ...could be a Christmas ornament or decoration ...kitchen or bath towel (new of course), framed pictures, artwork or handmade items ...Seraphim angels or Susan Lordi Willow Tree, Butterflies on anything ..a chair or lamp...a night light or magnet ..note paper, a pen, something you may have purchased at the national conference and never used ...even heart things...wallet, a watch. At the national convention they even sold items that did not have butterflies or hearts like Coach wallets and Vera Bradley items...so any and all items that can be sold would be greatly appreciated. If you'd like a donation receipt, please let them know when you send your donation. TCF is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization.

Donations may be sent to: Betty Valentine, 302 Llangollen Blvd., New Castle, DE 19720

HOPE = THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Posted Feb 20, 2019 on TCF website by Marie Levine (bereaved parent and author of "First You Die" and a "Tinture in Time")

Olivia was born still – an umbilical cord too tightly wound.

Lucas was two days old when he died from complications.

Greta was only two years old when she was killed by falling debris.

Max was seven when he died from a brain tumor –
Jasmina was only six.

Jaden was ten when an asthma attack proved fatal –
Donald was 16 when he suffered a similar fate.

Kareem was 15 when he drowned along with his brother Kevin; Peter was 22 when his friend lost control of the car he was driving him home in; Charlie was 23 when his prescription didn't work with his social life; Mark and Karen were on their honeymoon when their bus ran off a mountain in Nepal; Kelli was 39 when she succumbed to ovarian cancer; Jimmy was 36 when a heart attack took him, and his brother Charlie followed a year later when cancer chose him. Eleanor was 41, Philip was 45, Andrew was 47, and Harvey was 59.

Sudden, unexpected deaths – walking, running, skiing, skating, driving, flying, burning, drinking, drugging, falling, swimming, shooting, stabbing, hanging, jumping; heart attacks, brain tumors, seizures, aneurysms, strokes, organ failures – so many ways to die.

No matter the age, no matter the reason – they all were children – leaving their parents and siblings here to grieve them too early, unexpected deaths. Every day children die. While the world turns for most, for so many parents the world suddenly stops. Losing a child sets survivors on a totally unanticipated life path.

This grief is different. There is so much to deal with even while disbelief is the prism through which everything else must now be seen. In a numb state of initial shock, we go through the motions necessary to shut down a life only partially lived. At last, able to focus on our grief, we discover it is not like any grief we have ever experienced, learned about or lived through with anyone we've ever known.

We try in vain to understand this mind-bending confusion while the uninitiated around us try to offer well-intended but ultimately useless comfort and solace based on their own limited understanding of loss. Our inability to fathom our new reality and the loss of hope for a future creates even more pain and isolation. Only those who have lived this calamity recognize the future that newly bereaved parents face. The bereaved become aliens in a world where they no longer feel like they belong.

Losing a child is the beginning of an extraordinary grief experience. Because healing doesn't begin as expected, doubts about one's own sanity begin to creep in. We begin to think that perhaps we are losing our minds.

Healing seems unattainable. We are reluctant to "let go" as others encourage us to do. Our grief is the most solid thing we have. We hang on for dear life. "Getting over it" is impossible. They say we'll never be the same; they are right. Frustrated by our inability to describe this unique grief experience, we finally find a measure of relief when we meet others who have lost a child. Without saying a word we feel safe in knowing they understand exactly what we are feeling. They've been there – and survived.

Parents who survive their children are chemically rearranged. Like a butterfly's metamorphosis, we too must confront changes in our personality, our physicality, our perspective, our health, our attitudes, our capabilities, our needs, our desires, and our understanding. Our healthy survival depends on our ability to reinvent ourselves. The future we spent a lifetime envisioning and working towards becomes a black hole; we have no idea where we're headed and we simply slide toward some unknown destination. Adjustment to this new reality can take years – the better part of a lifetime. As Jason Greene, Greta's Dad said, "Children remain dead in ways adults do not." Eventually, we do get over other inevitable losses. Like a stone in our pocket, we carry this loss for always.

It takes a very long time to care about anything again. But hope does live – in our world hope is The Compassionate Friends.

The Anniversary

Let me be sad today,
Give me this day to mourn.
It's the date my little son died,
And also the date he was born.

Let me think back to his birth
The fear of viewing him, dead.
Memories of holding him close,
And cradling his little head.

Allow me to visit his grave,
To let a few balloons go,
To place flowers lovingly,
And trim the grass that does grow.

Allow me tears to cry,
Love fills my heart to the brim
Spilling it on those close by.
While always longing for him.

Elizabeth Dent
TCF McMinnville, OR

*There's no tragedy in life
like the death of a child.
Things never get back to
the way they were.*

*By Dwight D. Eisenhower
(President Eisenhower and his wife lost their
3 year old son to scarlet fever)*

CHAPTER NEWS

Upcoming Topics:

Mar - *Randi Pearson shares thoughts on Dennis Apples book: Life after the death of my son: What I'm learning.*

Apr - *Sharing tattoo ideas.*

*Thank You
for your love gifts!*

★ Susan Cole for the Anniversary Love Gift in memory of her son, Jerrod Younker 06/1998 -- 03/2016.

★ Rod & Kelley Dyer for the Birthday & Anniversary Love Gift in memory of their son, Zachary Dyer 03/1992 -- 02/2018.

★ *We received a very generous donation through The United Way of Greater Dayton for 2017. I've tried to get information from United Way as to who made this donation. We would like to acknowledge the person in our newsletter. I would appreciate it if the person who made this donation could contact me at 937-836-5939. We are very grateful to all who support our chapter by attending meetings and through their Love Gifts.*

Barb Lawrence, Treasurer

Love Gifts should be made out to: The Compassionate Friends and mailed to Barb Lawrence, 4031 Wolcott Place, Englewood, OH 45322. Please send your donation by the 15th of the month prior to the month you want your child remembered in the newsletter.

Our Children Lovingly Remembered

March Birthdays

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Ava Nicole Lisky - Kathy Russell
 Bill Meadows - Fred & Pat Meadows
 Claire Landis - Matt & Chelsea Landis
 Dominique Sims - Gina Williams
 James Hatfield - Betty White
 Jordan Elizabeth Glawe - Jeff & Jackie Glawe
 Kaitlynn Ariana Yvonne Preston - David Preston
 Kyle L. Bryan - Jeanette Bryan
 Michael David Rhoades - David Rhoades
 Paul William Knisley - Kim Knisley
 Susan Eileen Lawrence - Barb Lawrence
 Taylor Davis - Barbara Davis
 Zachary James Dyer - Rod & Kelley Dyer

March Angel-versaries

Child—Parent, Grandparent, Sibling

Cassandra "Cassie" Campbell - Dawn Duff
 Erika Leigh Wetzel - Susan Wetzel-Philpot
 Jacquelyn Elizabeth "Jackie" Ahlers - Bob & Peg Ahlers
 Jerrid Younker - Susan Cole
 Jerrid Younker - Frank Younker
 Michael Talbot Sharpe - Amy Kasprzak
 Paul William Knisley - Kim Knisley
 Ryan Patrick Gilhooly - Constance Gilhooly



*Though time may push me forward each day,
 I will never get over the pain of losing
 someone as precious as you.*

~Narin Grewal

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Every effort is made to publish accurate information regarding the birth and remembrance dates. Please let me know if there is an error in the listing, in order to correct our records. If you receive this newsletter and you have not given us the name and dates for your child, but want them listed here, please contact me. - Editor

NOW for book review....

“Childloss, The Heartbreak and the Hope”

By Clara Hinton



This book was born from a heart that has been broken by the loss of two of Clara Hinton's sons. It is her belief that hearts broken by the loss of a child will always have a void, and there will forever be a longing ache for the child that is no longer here. But, we can and must learn to live in our brokenness. Deep within our hearts are seeds of hope. When we nurture those seeds we will learn how to see life with eyes of love once again. It is Clara's sincere hope and prayer that as you read *Child Loss: The Heartbreak and the Hope* your heart will be warmed and you will be able to see life from a new perspective that moves far beyond the heartbreak of child loss into the light of hope. She wants to thank you for walking through this journey of loss with her. As we rewrite our story from within our brokenness, may our story be one of courage and hope!

A Level Playing Field of Loss

A long time ago a "friend" referred to me as a professional griever. From his perspective, I was lugubrious or "over the top" in the long term expression of my grief. He had lost one son to SIDS, two years before my son died, and a second son from SIDS shortly after my son Kelly had died. I was devastated for him and his wife for their losses and tried to reach out to him. He was not receptive to help and he minimized his grief because in his words "they were babies." My friend encouraged his wife to not grieve or seek support as well, they later divorced.

Everyone grieves differently; different people, different circumstances surrounding the death, different ages, different relationships.

Now 27 years later, I am a grief professional, and I have dedicated my life to helping heal the broken hearts of those in grief. Most people recognize me as a bereaved parent for the death and physical loss of my son Kelly, and for the workshops I present around the country in which I honor his life. Kelly's death was the impetus for my book *Letters To My Son* and the resulting workshops that I conduct.

What many do not realize however is that I am also a bereaved sibling. A year before my son was diagnosed with cancer, my twin sister Sandy and her two young sons, Travis and Jason, were killed in an automobile accident. Three members of our family were gone in an instant from a horrible crash that precluded the use of an open casket for the wake and funeral. The grief was then beyond my comprehension, and I grieved hard for my best friend and "wombmate" and her boys. She also left behind a set of 18-month-old boy/girl twins who I vowed would know their mother through my active participation in their life.

Growing up my sister and I were treated as a single unit and referred to by most everyone as simply "the twins". We were different as night and day and we each had our own set of friends that we shared. I loved it, and although we had our differences, we were the best of friends. When my sister died, I lost my best friend.

When my son was diagnosed with terminal cancer I had to put my grief for my sister on hold to pour all my energy into helping my son in an 18 month battle with his killer. I could not grieve for my sister while giving all I had fighting for Kelly's life. After my son died, my newfound grief overshadowed the grief for Sandy and her boys. I was on grief overload and numb from head to soul for a long, long time. Ten years before Sandy was killed, my older brother David had died in a state hospital after suffering for 25 years with cerebral palsy and severe mental and physical handicaps that kept him bedridden his whole life; he never walked or spoke a word.

I never really knew my brother David; I certainly did not know how to grieve for him. His death was sad for our family, but there was a part of me which felt happy for him that he no longer had to suffer the prison that was his body. As I look back, I am a bereaved Sibling twice, and each experience was completely different. My own Sibling grief journey has taught me how important it is for us to understand that every loss is unique, every relationship is unique, and every grief experience will be different for siblings.

The ages and relationship siblings have with each other can have a huge impact on their intensity of grief for a brother or sister who has died. The grief for my sister incomprehensible, the grief for my brother was for the pain my mother was experiencing and not that of my own. The five-year-old will grieve differently for the loss of a sibling away at college than he would for a Sibling that he fights with daily for the remote control.

Small children are naturally more resilient and live in the now, teen grief is compounded by raging hormones and a desire to be grown up and not a child, both of which can affect the processing of their grief. Many times we insulate children from the grieving process and we do them a great disservice; they become the forgotten grievers and their loss is marginalized.

I do not believe any child of any age should be kept from the wake or funeral, death is a part of life and being a part of the mourning process promotes healthy proactive grieving. More damage is done by secrecy, misinformation from peers and compassionate neglect from adults. Death, just like life is a family affair and the grief of a Sibling should be honored and encouraged. When we as adults fully honor the grief of our children, it sets the tone for how they will process future losses they will surely incur as they move through life. Let us strive not to differentiate grief by age, if there is love involved and a relationship held, a death in the family will strike all hearts. The depth of the grief for the loss of a Sibling is directly proportional to the depth of the love and relationship and we must honor it. My hope is the term forgotten mourner will become a thing of the past and that Siblings will be validated for their own grief on a level playing field with all those who mourn.

Mitch Carmody is an author, speaker and nationally recognized grief professional. Mitch is the host of his own radio program

"Grief Chat" on KDWA radio in Hastings, MN



**The
Compassionate
Friends**

Miami County Chapter
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

2445 N Montgomery County Line Rd
Tipp City OH 45371

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

The Compassionate Friends is a self-help organization which offers support to families who have experienced the death of a child. Only a person who has experienced the trauma of losing a child can fully understand the pain and suffering involved.

We gather to listen) to share) and to support each other in the resolution of our grief. We need not walk alone. we are The Compassionate Friends.

MISSION STATEMENT ... The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

If you are receiving our newsletter for the 1st time, it is because someone told us that you might find it helpful. To find out more about The Compassionate Friends, please call our Chapter Leader, Kim Bundy (937) 573-9877. We cordially invite you to our monthly meetings held on the fourth Thursday of each month. Nothing is ever expected of you. You don't have to speak a single word. Parents who do attend, find comfort, support, friendship and understanding from others who have also lost a child. You do not have to come alone - bring a family member or friend with you.

You need not walk alone!



IF YOU ARE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER, AND WISH TO HAVE YOUR NAME REMOVED FROM OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE CALL (937) 478-3318 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE. Thank you.